

Message Text

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ORIGIN IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-10 EA-10 EUR-12 NEA-11 ISO-00
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L/UNA:AKRECZKO

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
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AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY LIMA
INFO ALL DIPLOMATIC POSTS

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: ILO, ELAB

SUBJECT:ILO 1978 CONFERENCE

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1. FROM JUNE 7-28, 1978, ILO WILL HOLD ITS 64TH INTER-NATIONAL LABOR CONFERENCE IN GENEVA. THIS WILL BE THE FIRST ANNUAL ILO CONFERENCE SINCE THE US WITHDRAWAL, AND WILL PROVIDE AN IMPORTANT TEST OF ILO MEMBERS IN TERMS OF THEIR CONCERN ABOUT THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE ILO AND THE POSSIBLE RETURN OF THE US.
2. UPON RECEIPT OF THIS MESSAGE, ACTION ADDRESSEES ARE REQUESTED TO APPROACH APPROPRIATE HIGH-LEVEL FOREIGN MINISTRY AND LABOR MINISTRY OFFICIALS. ADDITIONAL DISCUSSIONS SHOULD BE HELD WITH KEY EMPLOYER AND WORKER DELEGATES AT POSTS' DISCRETION. IF INFO ADDRESSEES BELIEVE AN APPROACH ALONG SIMILAR LINES WOULD BE PRODUCTIVE THEY ARE ENCOURAGED TO DO SO. (REQUEST BRUSSELS CONTACT JEF HOUTHUYS AND PORT OF SPAIN CONTACT DIANA MAHABIR WHO WILL SERVE AS WORKER AND EMPLOYER VICE-CHAIRPERSONS RESPECTIVELY AT 64TH CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ON APPLICATION OF CONVENTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.) REQUEST REPORT ON DISCUSSIONS WITH INFO COPY GENEVA.
3. FOR MEXICO: CONFERENCE IS SCHEDULED TO ELECT MEXICAN CHAIRMAN, WHO MAY HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO PLAY CRUCIAL ROLE.

IN ADDITION, MEXICO HAS OFFERED ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS TO BE OF ASSISTANCE IN ENCOURAGING US RETURN TO THE ILO (E.G., SEE GENEVA 06891 REPEATED TO MEXICO).

4. FOR GENEVA; TO EXTENT POSSIBLE, REQUEST YOU CONTACT GENEVA REPS OF ACTION ADDRESSEES WITH VIEW TO ASSURING THAT THEIR ATTITUDE ON MAJOR ISSUES IS CONSISTENT WITH VIEWS EXPRESSED IN CAPITALS.

5. IN MAKING APPROACH, POSTS MAY DRAW UPON FOLLOWING POINTS:

A. AS THE ANNUAL ILO CONFERENCE HAS DRAWN NEARER, SEVERAL GOVERNMENTS HAVE ASKED THE U.S. GOVERNMENT FOR ITS VIEWS OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ORGANIZATION. IN PARTICULAR, THEY HAVE ASKED WHETHER THE U.S. WOULD CONSIDER RETURNING TO THE ILO.

B. U.S. CONTINUES TO BELIEVE ILO HAS POTENTIAL TO BE POWERFUL FORCE FOR PROGRESS IN MANY AREAS. THROUGH ITS PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, RESEARCH, STANDARDS SETTING, TECHNICAL COOPERATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES, ILO HAS CONTRIBUTED TO IMPROVING THE WELL-BEING OF WORKERS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. WE BELIEVE ILO HAS MUCH TO OFFER BOTH DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES -- BUT THAT REAL VALUE OF THE ORGANIZATION LIES IN ITS UNIQUE TRIPARTITE ROLE IN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, RATHER THAN ITS USE AS ARENA FOR POLITICAL SKIRMISHING.

C. IN ANNOUNCING U.S. DEPARTURE FROM THE ILO, THE WHITE HOUSE STATED THAT THE U.S. WOULD CONSIDER RETURNING TO THE ILO, PROVIDED THERE WAS PROGRESS ON THE MAJOR OUTSTANDING ISSUES. IN LIGHT OF THIS, THE U.S. CABINET-LEVEL COMMITTEE CHAIRED BY SECRETARY OF LABOR WILL REVIEW DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE U.S. WITHDRAWAL AT THE END OF THE 64TH CONFERENCE AND WILL MAKE A RECOMMENDATION TO PRESIDENT. FORTHCOMING CONFERENCE HAS THEREFORE GREAT SIGNIFICANCE FOR FUTURE U.S. RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ILO. IN PARTICULAR, U.S. ATTACHES GREAT IMPORTANCE TO PRESERVING ILO PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES AND WILL REVIEW DEVELOPMENTS, ESPECIALLY THE CONFERENCE RESULTS, IN THAT LIGHT. UNLESS THERE IS SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS, U.S. DOES NOT EXPECT TO RETURN TO ILO. ON THE OTHER HAND, SHOULD 64TH CONFERENCE PROVIDE CLEAR INDICATION OF PROGRESS ON OUTSTANDING ISSUES, U.S. WILL VERY SERIOUSLY CONSIDER REJOINING ORGANIZATION.

D. FROM U.S. STANDPOINT, MOST POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT IN ILO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SINCE U.S. WITHDRAWAL IS REAFFIRMATION BY COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS (COE) ON THE APPLICATION OF CONVENTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF PRINCIPLES OF UNIFORM AND OBJECTIVE EVALUATION OF ILO CONVENTIONS. IN PARAGRAPH 10 OF 1978 COE REPORT, THERE IS EXPLICIT STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES WHICH U.S. STRONGLY ENDORSES. PERHAPS THE MOST CRITICAL

FACTOR IN US DECISION TO WITHDRAW FROM ILO WAS FAILURE OF 1977 CONFERENCE TO ADOPT -- FOR ONLY SECOND TIME IN ILO HISTORY -- REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ON APPLICATION OF CONVENTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (CACR) CONTAINING SIMILAR STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES. WHILE NO SINGLE DEVELOPMENT WOULD ENSURE US RETURN TO ILO, CERTAINLY NOTHING COULD DO MORE TO CREATE FAVORABLE CLIMATE THAN FOR 1978 CACR TO ADOPT STATEMENT INCORPORATING COE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN PARAGRAPH 10, AND FOR CONFERENCE PLENARY TO ADOPT 1978 CACR REPORT.

E. US ALSO PLEASED THAT DIRECTOR GENERAL WAS ABLE TO ARRANGE VISIT, WITH CONCURRENCE OF ISRAEL AND ARAB NEIGHBORS, OF SPECIAL MISSION TO ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. THIS VISIT, CONDUCTED TO REVIEW ALLEGATIONS OF ISRAELI VIOLATION OF ILO CONVENTION 111 (DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT), REPRESENTS POSITIVE STEP TOWARD HANDLING ALLEGATIONS CONCERNING ISRAEL THROUGH DUE PROCESS PROCEDURES. US BELIEVES THAT REPORT FROM SPECIAL MISSION WILL PROVIDE OBJECTIVE REVIEW OF FACTS, AND HOPES ILO MEMBERS WILL ACCEPT MISSION REPORT AND BASE ANY FURTHER ACTION ON RESULTING CONCLUSIONS. US ALSO HOPES THAT ILO MEMBERS WILL INSIST THAT ANY FUTURE ALLEGATIONS RELATING TO ISRAEL OR ANY OTHER MEMBER BE HANDLED THROUGH EXISTING ILO INVESTIGATORY MACHINERY WITH FULL RESPECT FOR DUE PROCESS.

F. US REGRETS THAT NO DEFINITIVE ACTION HAS BEEN TAKEN ON PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE 17 OF THE CONFERENCE STANDING

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ORDERS CONCERNING RECEIVABILITY OF RESOLUTIONS. PROPOSED AMENDMENT IS IMPORTANT TO PRINCIPLE OF DUE PROCESS, AND DECISION OF 1977 CONFERENCE TO PLACE PROPOSED AMENDMENT ALONGSIDE DIFFICULT STRUCTURE ISSUES (RELATING TO, AMONG OTHER THINGS, SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF GOVERNING BODY) WAS MOST REGRETTABLE. US IS AWARE THAT THERE HAVE BEEN INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS CONCERNING AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE 17

AND THAT A REVISED TEXT HAS BEEN CIRCULATED. IN GENERAL, US BELIEVES SUBSTANCE OF REVISED TEXT REPRESENTS POSITIVE STEP IN THAT IT PROVIDES EXPLICIT RECOGNITION OF DUE PROCESS PRINCIPLE. US HOPES 64TH ILO CONFERENCE WILL BE ABLE TO REACH AGREEMENT ON TEXT, EVEN IF THIS MUST BE DONE SEPARATELY FROM STRUCTURE ISSUES.

G. FROM US STANDPOINT, MOST NEGATIVE DEVELOPMENT SINCE US WITHDRAWAL RELATES TO EFFORTS TO CHANGE ILO STRUCTURE, PARTICULARLY SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF GOVERNING BODY. FOR THE US, THE BASIC ISSUE REMAINS PRESERVING THE INTEGRITY OF THE GOVERNING BODY. US BELIEVES THAT PROPOSAL OFFERED BY IMEC, AS WELL AS STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES OFFERED BY G-77,

BOTH CONTAIN ELEMENTS WHICH WOULD RENDER GOVERNING BODY INEFFECTIVE AS TOOL TO MANAGE ILO PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES. ADOPTION OF SUCH A PROPOSAL WOULD BE A SERIOUS OBSTACLE TO U.S. RE-ENTRY INTO THE ILO. AS POSTS PREVIOUSLY HAVE BEEN INFORMED, THE U.S. DID MAKE A COUNTERPROPOSAL TO DIVIDE THE PRESENT NUMBER OF GOVERNMENT SEATS EQUALLY AMONG FOUR REGIONS, (NAMELY AMERICAS, EUROPE, ASIA AND AFRICA).

H. PARTICIPANTS IN 64TH ILO CONFERENCE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO ADVANCE THE CAUSE OF ILO PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES, AND THEREBY HELP CREATE CONDITIONS THAT MAY ENABLE US TO FAVORABLY CONSIDER REJOINING ORGANIZATION. WE ARE HOPEFUL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THAT GOVERNMENTS WILL DEVELOP POSITIONS ON CONFERENCE ISSUES THAT CAN PERMIT THE ILO TO REMAIN TRUE TO ITS ORIGINAL PURPOSES AND CONSTITUTIONAL PROCEDURES AND THAT DELEGATIONS WILL BE INSTRUCTED ACCORDINGLY. VANCE

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